

Amendment to the Claims:

In compliance with the Revised Amendment Format, a complete listing of claims is provided herein.

1. (Currently Amended) A method of facilitating the sending of mail from a restricted communications network, said method comprising:

automatically checking periodically by a communications unit external to a restricted communications network whether mail of the restricted communications network is to be sent; and

retrieving by the communications unit the mail from the restricted communications network, in response to there being mail to be sent;

wherein the automatically checking comprises sending a request from a program of the communications unit to a program of the restricted communications network inquiring as to whether there is mail to be sent, and wherein the program of the restricted communications network checks a data structure to determine whether there is mail in the data structure to be sent.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the automatically checking comprises sending a request from a program of the communications unit to a program of the restricted communications network inquiring as to whether there is mail to be sent, and wherein the sending of the request is via an inbound connection from the communications unit to the restricted communications network over an available port.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the retrieving comprises having the program of the restricted communications network serve the mail to the program of the communications unit via the available port.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 4~~ claim 1, wherein the retrieving comprises having the program of the restricted communications network provide the mail in the data structure to the communications unit.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 4~~ claim 1, further comprising providing the mail to the data structure.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein the providing is performed by a queue program of the restricted communications network, and wherein the queue program receives the mail from another program of the restricted communications network, said another program capable of receiving mail from one or more communications units of the restricted communications network.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising forwarding the mail from the communications unit to one or more receivers.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein a receiver of the one or more receivers comprises an intended recipient of the mail.

10. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein a receiver of the one or more receivers comprises an intermediary to facilitate forwarding the mail to an intended recipient of the mail.

11. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the forwarding comprises parsing the mail into one or more messages and sending the one or more messages to the one or more receivers.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the manner in which a message is sent to a receiver is dependent on the type of receiver.

13-29. (Canceled)